AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. - 21. (Cancelled).

22. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a solution by removing ~~having a changed composition of~~ biological components from a biological components-containing solution [[by]] which comprises subjecting the biological components-containing solution to ~~treatment in~~ at least two treatment steps; wherein the two treatment steps are selected from: (1) a step of adsorbing on to a selectively hydrophobic substrate a portion or all of proteins having a molecular weight equal to or higher than that of albumin; (2) a step of removing a portion or all of proteins having a molecular weight equal to or higher than that of albumin by fractionation with a molecular sieve; and (3) a step of concentrating proteins by passing a portion of the solution through a porous separation membrane and retaining the portion of the solution that does not pass through the porous membrane.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of preparing a solution according to the claim 22, wherein the treatment step (1) is conducted using a permeation type separation membrane formed from a material containing one or more substances selected from cellulose, cellulose acetate, polycarbonate, polysulfone, poly(methacrylic acid) ester, poly(acrylic acid) ester, polyamide, polyvinylidene fluoride, polyacrylonitrile, polyester, polyurethane, polystyrene, polyethylene, and polypropylene ~~is used in the step (1)~~.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of preparing a solution according to the claim 22, wherein the treatment step (2) is conducted using a separation membrane containing one or more substances selected from cellulose, cellulose acetate, a polycarbonate, a polysulfone, a poly(methacrylic acid) ester, a poly(acrylic acid) ester, a polyamide, polyvinylidene fluoride, polyacrylonitrile, a polyester, polyethylene, and polypropylene ~~is used in the step (2)~~.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of preparing a solution according to the claim 22, wherein the treatment step (3) is conducted using a porous separation membrane containing one or more substances selected from cellulose, cellulose acetate, a polycarbonate, a polysulfone, a poly(methacrylic acid) ester, a poly(acrylic acid) ester, a polyamide, polyvinylidene fluoride, polyacrylonitrile, polyethylene, and polypropylene ~~is used in the step (3)~~.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of preparing a solution according to the claim 22, wherein ~~a material fixing~~ one or more substances selected from a group consisting of a polyethylene imine, an aminomethylpyridine, a polyphenol, a blue dye, a divalent metal ion, and an alkyl group-containing compound [[in]] is fixed to the surface [[is]] of the substrate used in [[the]] step (1) or the molecular sieve used in step (2).

27. (Currently Amended) The method of preparing a solution according to the claim 22, wherein before treatment step (1) or step (2) one or more substances is added to the solutions, said substances being selected from [[a]] the group consisting of a surfactant, an emulsifier, an organic solvent, an alcohol, an ethylene glycol, a propylene glycol, a polyethylene imine, an

aminomethylpyridine, protamine sulfate, ammonium sulfate, a polyphenol, a blue dye, a caotropic salt, and an alkyl-containing compound ~~are added to an aqueous solution in the step (1) or the step (2)~~.

28. (Original) The method of preparing a solution according to the claim 22, wherein the biological components-containing solution contains a sample of human-derived components.

29. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for preparing a solution by removing biological components ~~having a changed composition~~ from a biological components-containing solution, wherein the apparatus comprises at least two modules ~~kinds of means~~ joined by a flow path and selected from the following modules: (1) ~~means of~~ a module for adsorbing on to a selectively hydrophobic substrate a portion or all of proteins having a molecular weight equal to or higher than that of albumin; (2) ~~means of~~ a module for removing a portion or all of proteins having a molecular weight equal to or higher than that of albumin by fractionation with a molecular sieve; and (3) ~~means of~~ a module for concentrating proteins by passing a portion of the solution through a porous separation membrane and retaining the portion of the solution that does not pass through the porous membrane.

30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus for preparing a solution according to the claim 29, further comprising a liquid flow-out path ~~to be~~ for transporting the prepared solution which is joined to a liquid chromatograph, an electrophoretic apparatus, or a mass spectrometer.